

Cluster Leader Electronic Message
A monthly update for Writing Cluster Leaders
from the KDE Writing consultants
September 2006

Dear Cluster Leaders,

This is the first issue of CLEM (Cluster Leader Electronic Message) for this school year. We have lots of important information in this issue, so I would encourage you to read it completely.

If you are not the cluster leader this year, please forward this message to the appropriate person. Then, email and let the appropriate grade-level consultant know whom to add to the distribution list and whom to delete.

In this issue, please find information on:

- ❑ The new Portfolio Assessment Contractor company;**
- ❑ Writing Updates;**
- ❑ Upcoming Trainings;**
- ❑ A note about summer mileage reimbursements;**
- ❑ A note for EKUWP fellows (from EKUWP); and**
- ❑ A new section called “Instructional Issues” which will be a discussion section of common questions or concerns cluster leaders are facing.**

Back-to-School

Welcome back! We hope you have had a restful and relaxing summer and that you’ve come back to school ready for the new assessment design. It will be a year full of change in the writing assessment to continue refinement of Kentucky’s writing program.

Kentucky’s Writing Program: In the News

In an article titled “Assessing with Heart” from the Summer 2006 issue of the *National Staff Development Council*, author Vicki Spandel speaks highly of Kentucky’s Writing Assessment.

“ . . . When such assessment is designed with care and implemented with sensitivity, it can have immeasurable impact on the shape and force of writing instruction.

“A case in point is the assessment conducted by the state of Kentucky, which has shifted, just since 1990, from an emphasis on the ‘expedient five-paragraph theme’ (Starr in National Writing Project, 2003, p. 83) to a combination of on-demand and portfolio writing that spans genres, themes, and purposes, and includes writing produced for classes other than English” (14-15).

Once again, Kentucky teachers should be commended for their commitment to the program.

Reintroduction of Writing Consultants

Though we met many cluster leaders at our spring and summer trainings, we would like to take a minute to reintroduce ourselves for those whom we have not met and for those who are new cluster leaders this year.

KDE has three writing consultants whose job is to provide support to cluster leaders and teachers to use writing to support learning in the classroom. The KDE Writing Consultants are

Depeka Croft	Depeka.Croft@education.ky.gov	(elementary)
Dena Cole	Dena.Cole@education.ky.gov	(middle school)
Lee Ann Hager	LeeAnn.Hager@education.ky.gov	(high school)

If you have any curriculum questions, please feel free to email or phone the appropriate grade-level consultant. Our phone number is (502) 564-2106.

For questions that relate directly to the Assessment, you may contact the Office of Assessment and Accountability at (502) 564-2256.

Collaborative for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The Collaborative for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is our new portfolio testing contractor. While the overall assessment is under the direction of Measured Progress, the portfolio is now being handled by a Kentucky-based company, CTL.

Elizabeth Dick is the CTL representative who serves as a liaison to KDE in portfolio-related matters. She will be the person in charge of making arrangements for cluster leader meetings, among many other things, so please be aware that you will be receiving emails from CTL in the future instead of CTB McGraw-Hill. The cluster leader trainings and portfolio-related concerns will be emailed to you from Elizabeth Dick or Shelia Peak at CTL.

Elizabeth's contact information is edick@ctlonline.org or you may phone CTL at (502) 895-9500 Extension 326.

Writing Updates

We hope you were able to attend the summer cluster leader sessions. If not, the training information is located at this site:

<ftp://ketsftp.k12.ky.us/OAPD/2006SummerClusterLeaderTrainingMaster/>

We encourage you to provide the summer training that you received this summer to your faculty sometime in early fall. It is important that teachers begin thinking about the changes early to make certain the instruction matches the assessment.

[Writing Resource Page](#)

This page contains a variety of resources cluster leaders may find helpful in working with staff on integrating writing into the curriculum.

As mentioned earlier, the page [Writing Cluster Leader training materials](#) catalogs any materials we use at trainings, so that you may access the PowerPoints, handouts, etc. Currently, the only training materials available on this page are the Summer 2006 materials, but we will be archiving more as fall and spring cluster leader trainings occur.

As you begin sharing the writing assessment update information with your staff, it is important to keep in mind that these are only assessment changes. For many school writing programs, it will not be necessary to modify instructional practices in order to meet these revised assessment requirements. The [Writing Update Chart](#) may be helpful when having these discussions.

Many of you have asked for the new scoring rubric. You will be glad to know that it is now in the stages of approval through the Office of Teaching and Learning and KDE. We will send you the copy without “DRAFT” as soon as possible. If you are thinking about making posters (as some of you have indicated by your emails), I would hold off on that until you receive the final version.

Upcoming Cluster Leader Trainings**

New Cluster Leader Trainings—October 2, 3, 4, 2006--only for cluster leaders with **three or fewer years** experience.

Locations:

October 2—Carter Caves Resort Park; Pennyrile State Resort Park; Hazard Community and Technical College

October 3—Frankfort, Capital Tower Plaza, Ground Floor Auditorium

October 4—Daviess County Learning Center; Lake Cumberland State Resort Park

Focus of the session: This training is designed to give new cluster leaders the background on the roles and responsibilities they have as cluster leaders. Please note that no new information on the assessment design will be delivered at this training. **Only new cluster leaders should register. An invitation will be sent through the DAC Monday email Sept. 11. This registration process will take place through KDE.**

Fall Cluster Leader Trainings—October 25-November 15

Focus of the session: These trainings will focus on the new handbook, the new scoring rubric and anchor papers, and implications for classroom instruction. This training is not mandatory, but we highly recommend attendance as this will be the first formal rollout of new instructional and training materials. **These meetings are for cluster leaders only, one representative per school.**

******You will receive a letter from CTL with instructions for registration. Note that your instructions for registration may be different than when you registered with CTB, so please follow the directions carefully.

Upcoming Conferences

Kentucky Council of Teachers of English—February 9-10, 2007

“Explore the Pathways to Literacy”

Marriott Griffin Gate, Lexington, KY

For more information, visit <http://www.kcte.org/>

Kentucky Teaching Learning Conference—March 8-9, 2007

“Rigor, Relevance and Relationships: The Three R’s of a 21st Century Education”

Kentucky International Convention Center, Louisville, KY

For more information, visit <http://www.kentuckytlc.org/ktlc/default.htm>

A Note about Reimbursements

Many of you have emailed to note that you had not received your mileage reimbursement from KDE. Rest assured those forms were turned in. The finance office is backlogged as they have been changing over from one system to another. You should receive the reimbursement soon.

Message from EKUWP Writing Project Fellows

EKU Writing Project Fellows,

The EKU Writing Project (WP) is updating its mailing list so all WP Fellows can stay informed about the many opportunities offered by the Project. If you are an EKU WP fellow, please e-mail your name, participation year, preferred e-mail address and preferred telephone number to Jessica Goodpaster at writingproject@clark.kyschools.us. Help rekindle our “family” spirit.

Jennifer Bernhard

Instructional Issues

We are beginning a section of the CLEM called “Instructional Issues” to update you on the latest concerns cluster leaders are having across the state. For this CLEM, we will include an FAQ section to answer some common questions we have been asked during summer trainings and the beginning of the school year.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will we be receiving the new handbook and anchor papers?

A: Cluster leaders can plan on receiving new materials during the fall cluster leader trainings. If materials (or parts of them) can be released prior to that, we

will post them on the web and let you know via email where you may locate new materials.

Q: What should we do with our old handbooks and our old quality control and practice portfolios?

A: The former *Kentucky Teacher's Writing Development Handbook* will be replaced this fall with the new, revised handbook. Please continue using your "old" handbook until you receive the newer edition. Much of the information will be the same, but many sections have been revised and expanded for further clarification of instructional and assessment-related concerns.

Quality control portfolios are no longer secure, so you may wish to release them to teachers to use as instructional samples. Practice portfolios may be handled the same way. Though you may be tempted to throw them out, realize that they provide excellent samples of varying skills, genres and performance levels that can be very helpful to teachers and their students in the classroom.

Q: How is reflective writing different this year?

A: Reflective writing should still involve critical thinking and analysis and should be on-going in all Kentucky classrooms. Students should reflect on their learning process in all content areas frequently. The only difference in the Portfolio development of the reflective piece is that it has been opened up in terms of audience and form.

This piece has been traditionally referred to as "Letter to the Reviewer" and has had as its focus the analysis of growth in writing. Students should still be focusing on and analyzing their growth as writers, but now, they should analyze this growth through the "lens" of literacy. Students may wish to consider how their reading development has influenced them as writers. Given this purpose, they may choose the most logical form (e.g., letters, personal essays) and the most appropriate audience (e.g., teacher, portfolio reviewer, person who impacted literacy growth).

Though students may write to an audience other than the reviewer is possible, we still anticipate many students will choose to write a letter to the reviewer. Care should be given to making certain students are aware of the purpose of reflective writing for the Portfolio and, thus, they should choose the most logical audience and purpose.

Students could focus this reflective piece in many ways given the purpose of analyzing literacy growth and goals. For example, a student could have as her focus one piece in the portfolio. The student might reflect on her analytical lab report from science class. In the reflection, she could explain how her literacy skills developed during the inquiry process.

Likewise, students may focus on a certain learning experience that influenced literacy development. Much like other categories of writing, the purpose can be set (analyzing literacy growth/goals) and the student can focus it in many ways.

Q: What forms are appropriate for the high school requirement of transactive with an analytical or technical focus?

A: Form really isn't the issue with this new requirement for Grade 12. All the forms that we have traditionally considered "transactive" may have an analytical or a technical focus. Analysis is a means of idea development whereas "technical writing" suggests technical or specialized workplace forms (e.g., proposals, technical articles, etc.).

It is important, however, that in this piece, students show their ability to focus on an issue which they will analyze through writing. When students analyze, they break down that topic, issue, problem, etc., to examine its parts and reach new conclusions about the whole. Students should be analyzing for authentic purposes and audiences.

Teachers will find that many analytical pieces are technical as well. A "technical focus" would mean that students have as the focus of the piece a topic, issue, problem, etc., that relates to a specialized field. We have been working with technical writing for many years now, so it is important that teachers review that material also.

Students in grade 12 *must* have one piece identified as "transactive with an analytical or technical focus." It's possible, however, that they may have two pieces of this nature, given the other transactive category requirement.

This transactive piece could come from an English/Language Arts course, or it may be developed in a content area course. One piece in the Grade 12 portfolio, however, must come from a content area.

Q: When are the testing windows for the fall?

A: Sept. 11-15: On-Demand writing field test for grades 6 and 9

Sept. 18-29: EXPLORE AND PLAN texting

Nov. 13-17: On-demand writing, grade 12

A site of Interest

This site was forwarded from our Arts/Humanities folks. It might be provide an interesting connection with language arts:

<http://www.learningfromlyrics.org/>

Cluster Leader List

It's worth repeating. We are still working diligently to make certain we have the correct information in our cluster leader database. Please let us know if you are no longer a cluster leader and wish to be removed from the list. Likewise, please let us know the name of the new cluster leader.